



# Trolley Times

North Slope Historic District Inc. May 2021  
501(c)(3) Organization Volume 98

## May is National Historic Preservation Month

By Roger Johnson, Landmarks Preservation Commission Member

*Why does historic preservation matter?* The answer to this question is that historic preservation fulfills a fundamental need, our need for community. It unites us with the past and to one another. The North Slope Historic District is one of the largest residential districts west of the Mississippi, covering more than 228 acres and containing more than 950 properties. Past residents have included a governor, judges, bankers, store owners, railroad men, lumbermen, fishermen, clerks, laborers and countless others who have contributed to the rich history and continuing energy and diversity of our neighborhood.

Our predecessors had to deal with the same challenges we deal with daily: economic hardship, environmental challenges, political turmoil and maintaining their homes. They struggled with these hardships in the homes now included in the North Slope Historic District. They survived and thrived in the same homes where you now live; therefore, you have a very real connection to this rich legacy.

Historic Preservation Month is a celebration of preservation successes and warnings of possible losses. This month's activities and declarations are publicized to raise awareness and support for national and local challenges to "places that matter." Most preservation organizations publish a yearly list of properties that are threatened with ruin.



To learn more or get involved explore these websites:

North Slope Historic District: [TacomaNorthSlope.org](http://TacomaNorthSlope.org)

Historic Tacoma: [Historictacoma.org](http://Historictacoma.org)

Washington Trust for Historic Preservation: [preservewa.org](http://preservewa.org)

National Trust for Historic Preservation: [savingplaces.org](http://savingplaces.org)

Online Version of Trolley Times : [TacomaNorthSlope.org/library/TT.pdf](http://TacomaNorthSlope.org/library/TT.pdf)

"We strain to listen to the ghosts and echoes of our inexpressibly wise past, and we have an obligation to maintain these places, to provide these sanctuaries, so that people may be in the presence of forces larger than those of the moment."

- Ken Burns

# RESIDENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS ARE A GIFT TO TACOMA

By Jennifer Schreck, Tacoma's Historic Preservation Officer, April 2003

Condensed from an article in 2003 *Trolley Times*

Most people recognize the intrinsic value of a well-preserved historic neighborhood. When you ask anyone to draw a picture of a house, they typically draw a one and a half story, gable-end house that could have been built anytime from 1850 to 1899. The sketched house will often have divided light windows, a front door right off the sidewalk, and maybe even a front porch, depending on the artist's skills.

The houses sketched are those much like the early examples of houses in the North Slope Historic District. These houses are remnants of days when a street car shuttled people to work downtown, when moms greeted children with a fresh plate of homemade cookies, days when kids walked to school. These houses are sentimental reminders for everything many of us dream of having.

Equally important, the sketch does not include a large attached garage you walk around to get to a front door. The sketch is not a typical modern, suburban house popping up, infilling more established neighborhoods or replacing formerly undeveloped stands of woods.

The higher appreciation of property values in historic districts is likely due to our efforts to surround ourselves with tangible reminders of our past, combined with the dedication of district residents to retain the historic integrity of their district. Our old houses afford many of us the opportunity to sit on our front porches and call out

to neighbors who are out for an evening walk or chat with kids on their way to a friend's house.

In Tacoma, the historic districts afford a level of protection for those who have the right intentions but may lack the experience necessary to do the job properly. Design review, required for any changes that will affect the exterior of the house, is one responsibility of locally-registered historic

homeowners in Tacoma. This ensures that the character of the neighborhood is retained for everyone to enjoy.

Dedication for retaining historic integrity of our neighborhoods includes careful consideration for the upkeep and modernization of the historic home. For most people, properly maintaining these

resources we have become caretakers of is second nature. For some it is a task to be learned. *For all, it is a task that must be done.*

As residents of the North Slope Historic District, you deserve recognition of your dedication to historic preservation. That recognition comes in the form of placement on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, the Washington Heritage Register and the National Register of Historic Places. You all deserve a pat on the back for your hard work and dedication to assure that future generations will have a beautiful neighborhood to remind them of eras gone by.

Now, keep up the good work!



# Tacoma Planning Commission Considering Major City-Wide Zoning Change to Reduce Single-Family Zoning

By Deborah Cade, NSHD, Inc., Chair and Ex Officio Landmarks Commissioner

The Tacoma Planning Commission is considering a comprehensive plan revision called "Home in Tacoma," which would allow more development of small and midsize multifamily housing in neighborhoods currently zoned only for single family. It includes two potential scenarios:

The more limited approach would allow "low-scale" development, such as duplexes and triplexes, in all residential neighborhoods, and allow "mid-scale" development, including 3-4 story apartment buildings, along higher traffic and transit routes.

The more aggressive approach would allow 3-4 story apartment buildings in most residential neighborhoods, along with smaller multi-family residences.

There are several issues with this proposal.

- There is a question as to whether this will help with affordable housing. Recent development has not included affordable housing, which still needs an \$80,000 annual household income, and does not address needs of low income or very low income residents.
- Design standards are mentioned but are undefined. There is no protection against a large building shading an adjacent smaller house, no parking or traffic standards, and no open space requirements.
- There is a "goal" to avoid demolition, but a city-wide upzone will create incentives for developers to buy and demolish older homes and buildings to put in a larger development. Most neighborhoods do not have the demolition protection of a historic district like the North Slope, where a demo permit requires approval by the Landmarks Preservation Commission.
- Developers would likely be able to outbid prospective homebuyers. Long-time residents stand to be displaced when rental properties are sold for development.

- The City began developing this plan in January 2020, just as the pandemic was precluding the neighborhood informational meetings that would have otherwise occurred. There is no reason not to take additional time to address the proposal's likely unintended consequences.
- The North Slope, along with the Stadium District, is a great model of how single and multi-family housing can work well together and create a vibrant, more interesting community with a variety of housing choices.

Allowing new infill of smaller multi-family in all residential neighborhoods could work just as well, if these requirements are met:

- The new building is required to be of an appropriate scale to those around it.
- Developer provides parking so as not to create parking and traffic congestion, and
- The building is limited to available undeveloped lots or larger lots that could be subdivided so as to avoid demolition and displacement.

Please check out the City's "Home in Tacoma" website, including its interactive map that will show what zoning might apply to your home under the two different scenarios.

Although the comment period before the Planning Commission has ended, the **City Council will ultimately decide** this plan update, and comments may still be sent to the Council, so feel free to contact the City Council with your comments.

<https://www.cityoftacoma.org/cms/one.aspx?pagelid=180033>

*"Buildings need to fit in, to stand appropriately side by side; they are subject to the rule of good manners as much as people are."* Sir Roger Scruton

# LOOKING BACK 20 YEARS

Taken from the *Trolley Times*, April 2001

## Neighborhood Park

The park planned for the corner at North 8th and K streets finally has a definite timeline for construction. According to Jim Walton, Deputy City Manager, the city plans to put the park out for bid in mid-May, with a summer construction time. It is yet to be determined whether the Park District or Public Works will oversee bidding and construction.

The park is funded by the Thea Foss Bond Issue money given to each neighborhood council to use for capital projects. The \$100,000 for the park will pay for property purchase and lot construction.

The design was done by Metro Parks with input from neighborhood residents.

Mr. Walton assures us that the city will move swiftly to complete the park after the City Council approves the property transfer from Tacoma Power at the April 17 meeting.

Tacoma is proposing a new bond issue for a May 15 vote that will again include money for each neighborhood council to use for capital projects. This will be a great way to get improvements that we couldn't afford otherwise.



Substation, c 1953 Before Park

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# CAN WE FIND ANY OF JOB CARR'S OLD TREES?

By Julie Turner

I once lived in Vancouver, Washington, a town that grew up around Fort Vancouver, an old pioneer stopping-place established on the north bank of the Columbia River. Originally in British territory, the Fort traded furs with trappers, and sold supplies to American settlers; the Factor was named John McLoughlin, and he welcomed all and helped them with supplies and advice.

About 1826, the story goes, McLoughlin was given a handful of apple seeds by a British naval officer which a young woman had given him to plant in the "new world." The officer hoped McLoughlin would plant them in the orchard area he was fostering inside the Fort to produce fruit for bartering and to feed his workers.

Amazingly, one remnant of these trees remained when I was a small girl, and that had been planted *outside* of the Fort's walls, in the living area of the long-ago Fort's workers.



Old Apple Tree, Vancouver, WA

Believe it or not, *that old tree finally died just last year*, at an age substantially over 100 years, but the Fort Vancouver National Monument folks have saved the suckers growing up beside the old tree, and will now have a new apple tree to grow in the same spot - hopefully to a ripe old age, too.

So, I got to thinking: what old trees might still be *here* from Job Carr's and other homesteaders' orchards - what old fruit trees are still living and producing in our own back yards?

## Maybe we should look?

**Do you think you might have an old, old cherry or apple or plum tree on your property? Carr's homestead shack was about on the corner of North 8th and Sheridan, but I have no idea if he planted his orchard uphill or downhill or sideways, so the trees could be scattered over quite an area. In addition, his son and friends had homestead claims here, too, and they could have been orchardists, too.**

In her book, "Tacoma's North Slope," author Karen May and her daughter think they identified trees that could be from Job Carr's orchard - one in the front yard at 624 North M St. and another in the yard at 715 North Sheridan, which was the site of Job Carr's homestead cabin.

What we are looking for is an old, old tree, planted probably before 1887. How one tells how old a living tree is, just isn't clear to me. If any of you would like to help, please write.

Julie Turner [juliejayturner@gmail.com](mailto:juliejayturner@gmail.com)

# SPONSORS' CORNER

The Trolley Times has three new sponsors! We are now back to full-strength support for the printing of the NSHD newsletter. We are grateful for them!

1. **Carol Baker** joined our sponsor list for the November issue. She owns the Queen Anne home at 407 North K St. and, with her partner **Tim Anderson**, rents part of it as an Airbnb, the part she calls **Mrs. Jensen's Bakery**. She gives a discount to NSHD residents who have guests and put them up in her lovely, renovated old bakery site. Years ago the home had a bakery shop, Mrs. Jensen's, that opened out in front, from the basement level. Now, it houses visitors to our city - and our neighborhood. Drive by 407 North K St. and eye the spot for your overflow guests.

**Call at 253-307-2878.**

2. **Eric Chavez** is joining our sponsor list this month. **Axion Law Group** is led by attorney Eric Chavez. For over a decade, Eric has helped local families and small businesses in Tacoma and Pierce County achieve favorable resolution to disputes through litigation, both at trial and on appeal. Eric, his wife, and daughters live in the North Slope Historic District with a mini schnauzer that runs the house. Practicing personal injury, insurance, bankruptcy, and business litigation, Axion Law is proud to call Tacoma home and looks forward to representing our community.

**Call him at 253-339-8500**

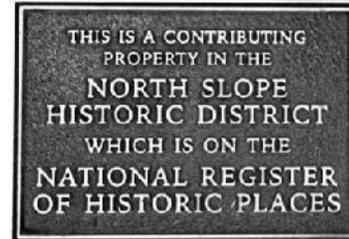
3. **MTC Insurance Agency Group** is located in University Place. Principal owner is **Michael Carney**, a longtime resident of the North Slope Historic District writes: "Our agency is represented by 7 independent producers. We are licensed in 9 states and represent 80 companies that insure both commercial and personal coverage needs. Partnering with an independent insurance producer means that you have the ability to choose the best carrier for your insurance needs. We can provide an assessment of your insurance needs, with a choice of which package fits you best. We want you to have a seamless overall experience. A one-service approach is our #1 goal for all our insurance clients. **Give us a call at 1-888-315-2231."**

## FOR SALE - NSHD BRONZE PLAQUE

### Want a Plaque for Your House?

If you would like a bronze plaque to mark your house as part of the NSHD National Register of Historic Places, the NSHD, Inc. Board has them for sale. Plaques are 5 x 7 and cost \$85 each.

253-779-0160 klmay@centurylink.net



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**TacomaNorthSlope.org** the NSHD web page

**TROLLEY TIMES.** The NSHD newsletter, published Feb., May, Aug., and Nov. The current edition can always be found at: <https://goo.gl/5sdbHq>

**North Slope NEWS.** Sign up on NSHD web page, and have items of general NSHD news, events, and the on-line *Trolley Times* sent to you.

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# FROM THE ARCHIVES...

Taken from the National Register of Historic Places

The house at 417 North M Street, an American Foursquare style, was built in 1905 for William A. Stewart and his wife Elizabeth and their two daughters. The house was estimated to cost \$3600, and had eight rooms, four on the main floor and four above.

Each floor had a fireplace and there was a "fuel lift from the basement" to help keep the fireplaces going. The main floor was finished on the interior in mission style and the wood used was slash-grain fir, stained golden oak. In addition, there was a clothes-chute and a second floor bathroom which was "unusually large." So, the final cost was \$5500.



William was born in Puyallup in 1867 and served as county auditor and deputy county auditor for several terms. He died suddenly one day in 1920 while working at the County Courthouse.



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